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ABSTRACT

A new professional discipline in the area of library media is emerging. This discipline does not merely represent a merger of the fields of librarianship and educational media; it is, rather, a new profession which is concerned with the design, development and analysis of instructional systems through the effective use of the most appropriate print and non-print materials and their accompanying technologies. As such it develops itw own body of knowledge, theories and generalizing hypotheses and requires its own special training programs for preparing its future professional practitioners. To be effective, these training programs must produce individuals who are able to: 1) design and produce instructional media resources; 2) function as resource persons in a multimedia approach to learning; 3) manage a media center; 4) promote a systematic attack on learning problems by coordinating human, fiscal, material and technological resources; 5) increase the efficacy of educational hardware usage; 6) analyze learners' needs and supply them with appropriate resources; and 7) understand the relevance of learning theories and learning research to media. (PB)

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THE FALLACIES OF LIBRARY MEDIA

Howard G. Ball

In a country that invents jargons as fast as its technology, a language--or more precisely, a terminology--of education has evolved before the philosophy behind the words has been thoroughly and consistently thought through by everyone who uses them. The result has been a confusing, misleading, and often fallacious bandying about of the term library media.

The developing area of library media has been an instance of a significant concept underminded by haste and expediency. The goal of student-centered instruction quite naturally suggests a cross-disciplinary curriculum, which is particularly appropriate for this field of study. Library media suggests an interdisciplinary approach toward effective utilization of instructional methodology and technology: selecting, storing, organizing, coordinating, and implementing print and non-print resources.

Librarianship, educational media, and library media have similar functions, but even greater differences. Library science will continue to maintain tenantry in the selecting, acquisitioning, classifying, cataloging, storing, and circulating of bibliographic information. The educational media field continues to focus upon designing, producing, constructing, and evaluating messages that complement the learning process.

Landau defines librarianship as:

> "The collection, preservation, organization and use of recorded information."

For the most part, the term educational media has referred to all instructional media exclusive of the print medium.

Morris (1963) describes educational media as:

> "Those things which are manipulated, seen, heard, or talked about, plus the instruments which facilitate such activity."

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With less emphasis on "thing" and more on the process, Silber views educational media as a system of designing, implementing, and evaluating the teaching-learning process. His thoughtful definition viewed this system as effectively utilizing human, fiscal, physical and material resources to reach specific educational objectives.

While the discipline of library media must retain close ties with both these areas in order to perform its own tasks, it takes its direction from a new and distinct way of thinking about teaching. The library media specialist is more fundamentally and actively involved in the development of school programs than are some of the more traditional media personnel. An official policy statement of the American Association of School Librarians (1965) extended the scope and purpose of the school library programs throughout this country as follows:

> "The American Association of School Librarians believes that the school library, in addition to doing its vital work of individual reading guidance and development of the school curriculum, should serve the school as a center for instructional materials. Instructional materials include books--the literature of children, young people and adults--other printed materials, films, recordings, and newer media developed to aid learning. . .The interest of modern school now has in finding and using good motion pictures, sound recordings, filmstrips and other newer materials simply challenges and gives increased dimension to established library roles."

It is a fallacy to assume that merely fusing two or more disciplines will create a totally new and different discipline called library media. In fact, the welding of librarianship and educational media has done little more than to bring these two distinct functions into closer fiscal and physical proximity. The fallacy is compounded when these two disciplines are brought together within the same department while each participating faculty member continues to perpetuate and support his own particular and favored area.

Insert Figure #1

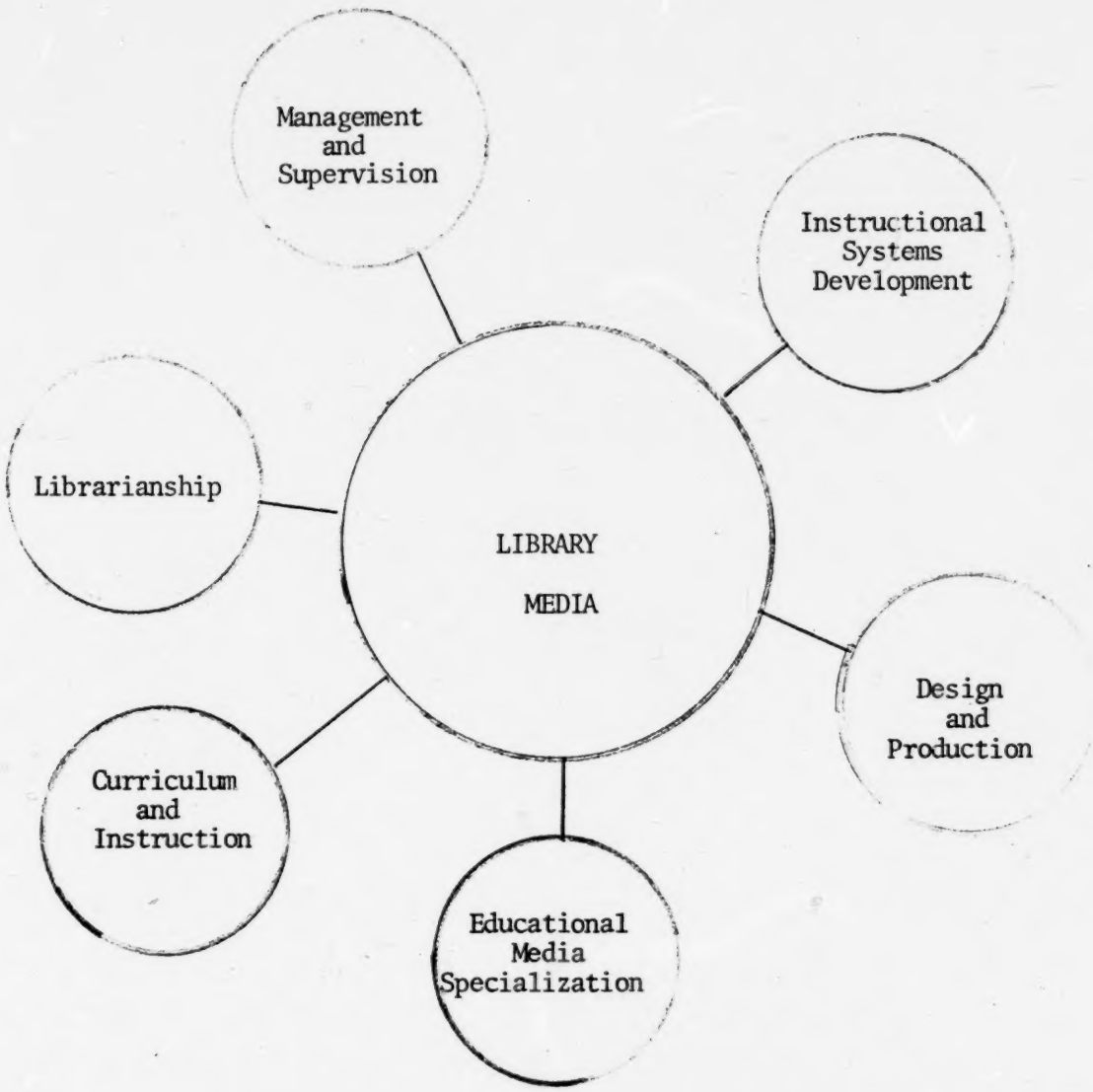
Management and Supervision
Instructional Systems Development
Librarianship
LIBRARY MEDIA
Design and Production
Curriculum and Instruction
Educational Media Specialization

Figure 1

The faculty of the School of Library Media, Alabama A. and M. University, has found that the sum total of all the areas of specialization charted in Figure #1 will indeed form a distinct specialization and educational approach. In other words, the field of library media not only draws on the knowledges, skills, and techniques of the school librarian, the curriculum specialist, the educational media specialist, and so on, but creates a synergistic effect, producing a new and different professional type.

It cannot be over-emphasized that the several fields, indicated in Figure #1, do not constitute a program of library media studies. The mere bringing together, physically and administratively, of human and material resources will not in itself provide the foundations for a library curriculum. The establishment of such a course of study requires a faculty team effort--a formulation of theories and practices directed toward unifying this discipline.

As the activities customarily included under librarianship, educational media, curriculum and instruction, management and supervision, instructional development, and design and production of resources coalesce into a new activity focused through the library media approach; this discipline is developing its own body of knowledge, theories, and generalizing hypotheses. It is the unifying synthesis of these principles that identifies, describes, and establishes library media as a separate and independent field of study.

The library media specialist utilizes both print and non-print resources and implements these resources into the informational requirements and needs of the users. The library media specialist views himself as an integral part of the instructional team bringing into play an array of instructional materials, both print and non-print, that enrich and broaden the instructional process. This specialist must not only possess a knowledge of the characteristics and properties of information but be able to assess the students' informational needs and ameliorate these deficiencies through prescribed, orderly, and

systematically defined procedures.

As mentioned before, a program of library media requires an interdisciplinary effort; information scientist, subject area specialist, the library media specialist, and a cadre of other professional and lay persons. The interaction of all of these plus an effective utilization of technological, material, physical and fiscal resources are necessary in order to develop and implement an effective and purposeful program.

Performance criteria for modern-day library media specialist indicates that this person must.

1. Possess skills in the development, design, and production of instructional media resources usually not obtainable in commercial form.

2. Function as a resource person within the learning environment in order to improve educational opportunities through the multimedia approach to learning.

3. Formulate and maintains standards for selection of media resources in order to assist other educators in critically analyzing the diverse quantities of instructional resources presently available to schools.

4. Possess competencies for organizing, managing, and maintaining the schools' media and information centers.

5. Utilize practical techniques of indexing and cataloging resources, systematically coding print and non-print items so that the retrieval of media resources becomes simple efficient, and usable for the centers' patrons.

6. Promote a systematic approach to learning by coordinating human, fiscal, material, technological, and physical material resources directed toward the instructional objectives.

7. Locate significant bibliographic and reference works that are necessary to support the curricular and instructional efforts of students and teachers.

8. Increase the efficacy of educational hardware usage (projectors, television sets, globes, realia, etc.), by incorporating them harmoniously and meaningfully into the instructional process.

9. Judge the readiness levels of learners and the materials appropriate to those levels, to ensure that each learner is exposed to media resources that are most appropriate, understandable, and purposeful.

10. Articulate learning and communication theories so that these constructs are reinforced and complemented by a wide use of appropriate media resources.

11. Bring into play a system for identifying, organizing, implementing, and evaluating automation for instructional and management purposes.

12. Have the ability for interpreting current media research and applying the conclusions toward improving the resource and service functions of the library media

Library media curricula often appear as simple combinations of two disciplines: librarianship and educational media. A graduate student supposedly develops into a library media professional by completing a series of technical courses related to the print and non-print dimensions. While this is perhaps the most widespread and damaging misconception of what a library media specialist is, it equally is erroneous to view him as a trained librarian with additional audio-visual competencies or as an educational media specialist who has taken a few prescribed courses in librarianship. As examples, let's consider two types of programs described as library media:

1. An established school of instructional technology permits its students to take four or five professional courses in the school of library science. These two schools are not located in the same building but across campus from one another.

2. A library school hires three educational media professionals to teach prescribed educational media courses within the library science department.

This indicates that there has been a failure to inquire into the need or the raison d'etre for such a profession.

Each of the programs described above are called library media programs. The library media discipline must first be logically defined in order to clarify its objectives and techniques. Without a generally accepted and workable definition, programs directed toward library media are often nebulous in purpose and vague in goals. Wide variations in program planning and curricula development, among colleges and universities, have nurtured numerous interpretations of the meaning of library media. A question on definition would ask, what constitutes a well-grounded library media program? Library media can be defined as that discipline which is concerned with the design, development, and analysis of instructional systems through the effective use of the most appropriate materials, both print and non-print and the accompanying technologies It includes the selection, organization, and evaluation of instructional media.

Erickson states:

> "Instructional media is somewhat more specific expression than educational media, connoting formal systematic application to pedagogy."

In planning a library media program, it is important to make a comprehensive analysis both of the program's content (what you want to develop) and strategies (methods for getting there). However, many incipient library media programs have focused heavily on the analysis of content with little or no effort directed at the analysis of the strategy or vice versa.

Library media is an emerging discipline: applying, testing, and proving its own definitions, generalizations and principles. It is essential that a graduate program for library media accurately assess needs, identify series of task-related skills and competencies, incorporate commodious theories, principles, and

generalizations which are related toward the unification of the library media concept.

Our School's course offerings are listed, sequenced, and described by a traditional format. This style of format seems to be most expedient for:

1. The University's registrar in ascribing the proper course credit hours and in computing a grade point average.
2. The bursar, in fixing tuition costs and attaching other course fees.

In planning graduate programs, our students are encouraged to select courses in prescribed clusters of three or four courses. Certain select course groupings, having similar goals, were consolidated by our faculty. These clusters contain coordinating learning activities, complement significant objectives, and reinforce related concepts. Our faculty uses an instructional team approach to connect the courses within each cluster. For example, one of our program goals is to provide the student with the opportunity to design, produce, select, classify, and implement a series of media resources which will assist teachers in developing and implementing comprehensive instructional programs. In order to meet this goal, a series of related tasks and activities were brought together within the structures of the following course offerings:

Preparation of Instructional Materials
Classification and Cataloging
Literature and Related Materials for Children
Instructional Systems and Design

The above cluster provides a full-time schedule for the graduate student working toward a Master of Science in Library Media degree. Each objective, within the cluster, is defined and delineated by modules specified toward the achievement of this goal.

Our graduate students may work individually on some modules, come together in small groups on other modular activities and meet in large groups to complete others. Although students are encouraged to select courses in prescribed clusters of three or four, a part-time student may elect to take less than three. Our curriculum and instructional organization provides for this. A faculty member can prescribe certain series of modules, tasks, and activities and subsequently adapt the student's schedule to include specified group and lecture activities.

Let me state at this point that there will always be some discreteness--some separation between the print and non-print dimension by virtue of the inherent differences in their physical and informational characteristics. E.g., the quality of information presentation of textbook material would differ from that of a video tape as would filmstrip from a 16mm film. Each instructional resource is different in structure and information delivery and each will produce varying affects on different learner types.

It would not be accurate nor appropriate to label some library media programs traditional and others nontraditional because neither definition would accurately describe any present or emerging programs. A library media curriculum is not a contradiction of established library and media curricula; it is a new concept. Library media coordinates and facilitates alternate opportunities for instruction through the use of a variety of optional learning activities, instructional delivery systems, and diverse educational technologies and resource materials.

Misinterpretations of library media often arise not in the conceptualization of its discipline, but rather in the formulation of the instruction and the development of its curriculum.

The library media concept is an attitude, it is a professional posture which is an outgrowth of faculty dialogue: the sharing of ideas, interests, and concepts. It has an advantage of incorporating faculty accepted goals and objectives, and integrating many media resource forms into a comprehensive and developmental library media program.

To grow--in fact, to survive--an academic discipline demands self-discipline of its practitioners. A discipline based on fallacies, feeble definitions, misinterpretations, and unreliable and precarious theories and principles will soon lose its vitality. To judge from the responses of educators, there seems little question that library media specialists are badly needed. Whether these needs will be met depends on the leadership and abilities of library media professionals in the field to clarify their goals, purposes, and programs.

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